

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13

DHA-02 SCS-03 SCA-01 EB-07 /083 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/AND/E - JAALLITTO;LEE

APPROVED BY ARA - MR. LUERS

ARA/AND - MR. DEVINE

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R 172105Z AUG 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY QUITO

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, PINT, PFOR, EC

SUBJECT: US CATHOLIC BISHOPS DEPART ECUADOR

REF: QUITO 5788

1. ECUADOREAN CHARGE ALMEIDA CALLED ON DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY LUERS ON AUGUST 16 UNDER INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTRY TO INFORM THE DEPARTMENT OF THE REASON FOR THE DETENTION OF THE US BISHOPS, WHICH WAS FOR INTERFERING IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF ECUADOR. ALMEIDA SAID THE BISHOPS WERE TREATED WELL, AS BEFITTED THEIR POSITION, BUT SAID THEY WERE ASKED TO LEAVE ECUADOR BECAUSE OF THEIR ACTIVITIES. HE ADDED THAT THE GOE HAD CONFISCATED VARIOUS DOCUMENTS THAT PROVED THE GOE'S CHARGES, AND THAT HE WOULD SEND COPIES TO THE DEPARTMENT ONCE HE RECEIVED THEM.

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2. LUERS REPLIED THAT IT IS OF COURSE THE RIGHT OF GOVERN-

MENTS TO MAKE SUCH JUDGMENTS BUT THE DEPARTMENT UNDERSTOOD THE MEETING OF THE BISHOPS WAS NOT HELD IN SECRET AND THAT IT HAD LITTLE TO DO WITH THE GOE. LUERS SAID THAT HE HOPED THE PUBLIC REACTION IN THIS COUNTRY WOULD NOT DAMAGE OUR EFFORTS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THE GOE.

3. DESK OFFICER ADDED THAT ONE UNFORTUNATE RESULT OF THE

DETENTION HAD ALREADY SURFACED: SENATOR BENTSEN'S LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT SAYS THAT SENATOR BENTSEN IS UPSET BY THE GOE'S ACTIONS (BISHOP PATRICIO FLORES IS FROM SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS), AND IS RECONSIDERING HIS AMENDMENT TO REMOVE ECUADOR AND VENEZUELA FROM THE GSP OPEC EXCLUSION.

4. FYI: CONGRESSMAN WILSON'S ASSISTANT, ED TERRAR, SAYS HE CALLED THE ARCHBISHOP OF SAN DIEGO RIGHT AFTER THE DESK OFFICER CALLED AUGUST 13, TO BREAK THE BAD NEWS, AND FOUND THE ARCHBISHOP NOT OVERLY UPSET. TERRAR BELIEVES THAT SINCE THE BISHOPS WERE RELEASED AND ALLOWED TO LEAVE ECUADOR AUGUST 14, THE REACTION IN SAN DIEGO SHOULD NOT BE BAD, AND SHOULD NOT AFFECT THE LST SALE. HE SAID HE WOULD SEND THE DEPARTMENT COPIES OF SAN DIEGO PRESS COVERAGE OF THE DETENTION, BUT WAS NOT EXPECTING ANY EDITORIAL COMMENTS. KISSINGER

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